

HISTORY OF ASPIRA²

In 1961 Dra. Antonia Pantoja and a group of Puerto Rican educators and professionals created ASPIRA (which means aspire in Spanish) to help Puerto Rican youth deal with the problems being faced by their community. They were convinced that the young people could overcome poverty and become productive and contributing members of the adult community—but not without obtaining a college education. ASPIRA stressed the importance of education and conveyed in its name the expectation that Puerto Rican youth could succeed. Since its formation, ASPIRA has grown from a small nonprofit agency in New York City to a national association with offices in Illinois, Florida, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC

In the last three decades, ASPIRA has taken the responsibility to expand its target population to include all Latinos residing in the United States. Presently, ASPIRA serves over 3,000 students representing more than 40 schools in New York State. ASPIRA provides leadership training, career and college counseling, financial aid, scholarship assistance, educational advocacy, cultural activities, and most importantly, continuing opportunities to implement community action projects. Throughout its existence, ASPIRA's commitment to its initial mission of leadership development has remained unchanged. All programs still aim to help Latino youth develop their intellectual and leadership potential so that they can achieve educational excellence and make a long-term contribution to improving their own lives and that of their community.

EL PITIRRE

The pitirre is the symbol of ASPIRA. A small tropical bird found in Puerto Rico, the pitirre is known for its agility, rapid flight and for its ability to outsmart, tire and defeat much larger birds. ASPIRA believes that the pitirre is a fitting symbol for young Latinos. Aspirantes gain the confidence of the pitirre by acquiring knowledge and developing their leadership skills. They can face and overcome seemingly overwhelming odds to become productive adults, returning to their communities the benefits of their skills and leadership abilities. The symbol of the pitirre reinforces ASPIRA's belief that even the smallest and seemingly powerless can take control of their lives and cause change.

² Source: ASPIRA of New York, Inc. Leadership Development Curriculum.

ASPIRA VISION

The vision of ASPIRA of New York is to establish a common purpose for the Puerto Rican/Latino community; that is, to promote the development of a population that aspires to advance the community as a whole along with its individual members. ASPIRA envisions a Puerto Rican/Latino community knowledgeable of, and involved in, public policy issues; a community proud of its cultural legacy while respectful of the experiences of others; and a community willing to give of itself for the benefit of the society at large. ASPIRA anticipates being a major contributor in Puerto Rican/Latino communities everywhere by the year 2000, which can only be made possible by a dedication to the population it serves and a commitment to excellence.

ASPIRA MISSION

The mission of ASPIRA is to foster the social advancement of the Puerto Rican/Latino community by supporting its youth in the pursuit of educational excellence. To accomplish this goal, ASPIRA sponsors leadership development programs that emphasize commitment to the community and pride in the Puerto Rican/Latino heritage.

ASPIRA PROCESS

AWARENESS

The process of becoming aware of one's cultural, racial and ethnic background and history. Discovery of self-value and value of others.

ANALYSIS

The process of engaging in critical thinking, including scrutiny and inquiry to expand ones knowledge and value of self and others, while appreciating skills necessary for everyday life.

ACTION

The process of putting the knowledge one has acquired to use for the benefit of self and others, especially one's family and community.



STUDENTS' RIGHTS MOBILIZATION FOR EQUITY

1. Students are entitled to have parents, advocates, and concerned educators involved in all decisions affecting their education.
2. Students are entitled to learn in an integrated, heterogeneous setting responsive to different learning styles and abilities.
3. Students are entitled to comprehensive, culturally supportive, and developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.
4. Students are entitled to access to a common body of knowledge and the opportunity to acquire higher order skills.
5. Students are entitled to broadly based assessments of their academic progress and grading structures that enhance individual strengths and potential.
6. Students are entitled to a broad range of support services that address individual needs.
7. Students are entitled to attend school unless they pose a danger to other children or staff.
8. Students are entitled to instruction by teachers who hold high expectations for all students and who are fully prepared to meet the challenges of diverse classrooms.
9. Students are entitled to equal educational opportunity supported by the provision of greater resources to schools serving students most vulnerable to school failure.



ASPIRA LEADERSHIP CLUBS

Role of Leadership Clubs

Throughout school-based and city-wide Leadership Clubs, students learn the ASPIRA Process of Awareness, Analysis and Action. The purpose of the ASPIRA Leadership Club is to provide a forum for students to become aware of their culture and community while developing their leadership skills and advancing academically. Through the Leadership Club, students will have an opportunity to express their views and appreciate the opinions of their peers. Additionally, each club plans and implements at least one community service project that allows them to give back to their community. Each club is led by a cabinet consisting of a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition, the clubs plan activities through work with three on-going club committees: Cultural Education, Community Action and Public Relations. All Leadership Clubs are represented at the ASPIRA Clubs Federation by their elected officers. Leadership Club meetings are facilitated by a Leadership Development Specialist who is a part-time ASPIRA employee. In order to be considered an official New York ASPIRA Leadership Club, all clubs must follow the Leadership Club guidelines established by ASPIRA of New York.

Leadership Club Guidelines

1. The club must have a minimum of 10 members present at each meeting.
2. Members must be initiated via the Areyto Ceremony in order to become Aspirantes.
3. Each club should give itself a name apart from the name of the school/borough.
4. The club must have a faculty advisor present at each meeting.
5. Attendance must be taken at each meeting.
6. Each club must have the following positions:
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Committee Chairpersons
7. Each club must have three permanent committees:
 - Cultural Awareness
 - Community Action
 - Public Relations
8. Each club must pay monthly dues of \$5.00 to the ACF out of club funds. Dues will be collected at the second ACF meeting of each month. There will be a \$2.00 late fee if not paid on time.
9. Each school year each club must do a community service project that focuses on social action.

LEADERSHIP CLUB COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

All committees are responsible for the following:

- Electing a Chairperson during club elections at the end of each year.
- Meet to develop a plan for a particular action/event.
- Research all details pertaining to an action/event.
- Establish task forces whenever necessary to carry out specific duties of a project.
- Consider financial requirements of action/event.
- Work in conjunction with other club committees to carry out the work.

Cultural Education

1. Promote Puerto Rican/Latino culture and build pride in Puerto Rican/Latino heritage among the club members, the student body, and the community.
2. Promote knowledge of events and individuals related to the Puerto Rican/Latino experience.
3. Develop a plan of action to carry out at least one cultural awareness activity within the school or outer community.
4. Research and organize activities that involve the Puerto Rican/Latino culture and experience (i.e.: plays, museums, concerts, movies etc.)

Community Action

1. Identify and research a major issue that the Puerto Rican/Latino community faces in New York. Issue should be selected by all club members.
2. Develop a plan of action to respond to the identified issue.
3. Carry out the plan through the club.

Public Relations

1. Create a positive image of ASPIRA and the Leadership Club within the school and surrounding community.
2. Conduct year-round recruitment drives.
3. Create and post flyers to advertise club meetings and all special events. (Remember that all flyers must be approved by the ASPIRA Development Office before distribution)
4. Maintain and update Leadership Club bulletin board.
5. Create a club banner.
6. Document participation in activities (i.e.: pictures, essays, awards, posters etc.)

GUIDES FOR LEADERSHIP CLUBS AND ACF³

Developing a Workplan

Each club should create a workplan that helps the cabinet and members manage the activities that will take place throughout the academic year. In addition, for each activity planned, the club should create a program plan that will ensure the activity/event is carried out the way originally intended.

When planning for an event, you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are we trying to achieve in doing this activity/event? Does it meet the mission of ASPIRA and our club?
2. Will we be the sole sponsor of the event or will be co-sponsor with another club?
3. What are the responsibilities in carrying out this event/activity?
4. Who is our intended audience?
5. What resources, policies, procedures apply to this event/activity?
6. What is the budget for this event/activity? How are we going to meet this budget?
7. Where will the event/activity be held?
8. How many people are we expecting?
9. Where will the activity be held? What type of room(s) will be needed?
10. What type of publicity will be needed for this program?
11. Did we discuss this event/activity with our Facilitator and Faculty Advisor?
12. Will we need any special equipment or supplies?

Fundraising

Fundraising is the most direct method of acquiring money for an event/activity. Fundraising activities may include selling of goods, raffles, parties etc. A good fundraising activity is one that produces substantial funds and incurs few expenses. Fundraised money is available for the club's use throughout the academic year. Any funds left over at the end of the year will be carried over into the next year.

Money collected from fundraisers should be:

1. Deposited into your school's general account;
2. Deposited into ASPIRA's bank account;

The treasurer is responsible for keeping track of all club funds. Keep in mind that when the club needs to draw from the funds, the Board of Education and ASPIRA of New York, Inc. require an invoice for the amount needed. **An invoice should be submitted at least two weeks prior to when the funds are needed.** The cabinet and club members should be aware of any and all school policies regarding fundraising and the disbursement of funds raised by the club.

³ Portions of the text for Developing a Workplan, Fundraising and promoting the event were borrowed from the Hostos Community College Club Officer Manual.

Promoting the Event

The most common method of promoting an event is through use of flyers or posters. If your school allows, you may also make announcements over the loudspeaker and/or place a notice in your school's newsletter.

Publicity Policy

1. All flyers and posters must be approved by the ASPIRA Development Office prior to distribution.
2. All publicity should bear ASPIRA's logo and name. The logo must appear before the name of the Organization and must be the same size font as the name of the Organization. The following is a sample:

 ASPIRA of New York, Inc.

3. All publicity should include the date, time and location of the event/activity and any entrance policies applicable to the event.
4. In accordance with ASPIRA policies: All contact with representatives of either special-interest or mass media (t.v., radio, newspapers, news services, magazines, etc.) must be authorized by ASPIRA in advance by the Executive Director. If given permission, you must remember that you are acting as a spokesperson for ASPIRA of New York, Inc. It is your responsibility to be sure that the point of view expressed is that of the Organization and that it is interpreted as accurately as possible. In addition, written publications must be submitted to the Executive Director in advance for clearance if they identify the author as a member of the Organization. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director are the official spokespeople for ASPIRA of New York, Inc.

Sample Club Business Meeting Agenda

Name of School/Club

Date:

AGENDA

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Reading of Minutes from last meeting
- IV. Officers' Reports
 1. President
 2. Treasurer
 - Collection of Dues (*if applicable*)
 - Financial Report
 3. Vice President
 - ACF Update
 - Fundraising
 4. Community Action Chair
 - Community Service
 5. Cultural Education Chair
 - Cultural Activities
 6. Public Relations Chair
 - Publicity/Recruitment
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business (This can also be used for Committee break-ups)
- VII. Announcements
 1. Cabinet Members
 2. LDS
 3. Faculty Advisor
 4. Club Members
- VIII. Adjournment

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP CLUB OFFICERS

President

1. Preside at all meetings and be punctual.
2. Have a clear understanding of parliamentary procedures.
3. Have a clear understanding of Leadership Club Guidelines and ACF Bylaws.
4. Develop business meeting agendas.
5. Vote only in case of a tie.
6. Authorize spending of club funds with Treasurer and Facilitator (LDS).
7. Serve as *ex-officio* (non-voting) member of all committees.
8. Represent club when working with ASPIRA and school administration.
9. Attend club and ASPIRA agency-wide events.
10. Write monthly and annual report in conjunction with Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Submit report to LDS and ACF Chairperson at the first club/ACF meeting of each month.
11. Meet weekly with club officers and Facilitator to review club progress and create agenda for next meeting.
12. Notify Facilitator of changes in scheduling.
13. Serve as optional, *ex-officio* members of the ACF.
14. Consult ACF Facilitator before any decision is made regarding fundraising events, spending of club money, and the use of the ASPIRA name.

Vice President

1. Preside at club meeting in the absence of the President.
2. Oversee all Leadership Club Committees.
3. Attend club and ASPIRA agency-wide events.
4. Write monthly and annual report in conjunction with President, Treasurer and Secretary. Submit report to LDS and ACF Chairperson at the first club/ACF meeting of each month.
5. Meet weekly with club officers and Facilitator to review club progress and create agenda for next meeting.
6. Sit as a member of at least one club committee.
7. Serve as a representative to the ACF. Vote at ACF meetings as a representative of the Leadership Club, not as an individual. Sit as a member on one ACF committee.

Treasurer

1. Collect monthly club dues. (If allowed by the school) Amount of dues are decided upon by the club.
2. Collect funds raised through any club fundraisers.
3. Keep accurate records of deposits and expenses.
4. Prepare monthly financial statements to be presented and submitted to President and Vice President. This will be included in the cabinet's monthly report to be submitted to LDS and ACF Chairperson at the first club/ACF meeting of each month.
5. Meet weekly with club officers and Facilitator to review club progress and create agenda for next meeting.
6. Consult President and Facilitator before any decision is made regarding fundraising events, spending or disbursing club funds, and the use of the ASPIRA name.
7. Collect receipts for all expenses from members before they can be reimbursed.
8. Prepare annual financial statement to be presented to the club and submitted to the President and Facilitator.
9. Monitor club fundraising efforts.
10. Attend club and ASPIRA agency-wide events.
11. Sit as a member of at least one club committee.
12. Serve as a representative to the ACF. Vote at ACF meetings as a representative of the Leadership Club, not as an individual. Sit as a member on one ACF committee.

Secretary

1. Maintain accurate records of attendance (roll) for club meetings. Keep a copy of attendance sheet and submit original to Facilitator.
2. Maintain accurate records of club proceedings in minutes book. Submit copy of minutes to President and Facilitator at the first meeting of each month.
3. Must always have a copy of minutes and Leadership Club/ACF Handbook.
4. Notify all members and Facilitator of any changes in scheduling and special events.
5. Attend club and agency-wide events.

Minutes:

The minutes should contain a record of what is done, and not what is said.

Content:

- Date, place and time of meeting;
- Whether it is a regular or special meeting;
- Name of person presiding;
- Name of secretary;
- All main motions, whether adopted or rejected. A motion that was withdrawn should not be recorded;
- Names of persons making the motions—"seconder" not needed;
- Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost;

Club Committee Chairpersons

1. Meet at least once a month with committee.
2. Assign committee members to specific responsibilities.
3. Oversee work of the committee.
4. Write monthly report and update club at business meetings. Submit reports to President and Facilitator.
5. Take attendance at every committee meeting. Attach attendance sheet to monthly report.
6. Attend club and agency-wide events.
7. Consult President and Facilitator before any decision is made regarding fundraising events, spending of club money and the use of the ASPIRA name.

Notes:

- The Leadership Development Specialist is the club Facilitator.
- All monthly reports are to be submitted to the Facilitator at the first club meeting of each month and to the ACF Chairperson at the first ACF meeting of the month.
- Facilitator will be present at all club and cabinet meetings unless otherwise notified.
- Club President will be notified if there is a change in Facilitator.
- Although attending club and agency-wide activities is listed as a specific duty of club cabinet members, it is the responsibility of all club members to support events.